

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
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INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
AMCONSUL HONG KONG

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E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR FR XC VN LA
SUBJ: FRENCH VIEWS ON INDOCHINA

1. VIETNAM

IN A PERIODIC TOUR D'HORIZON, QUAI OFFICIAL SAID THAT FRENCH RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM WERE PROCEEDING SMOOTHLY. THE PHAM VAN DONG VISIT HAD ACHIEVED ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL FRENCH GOALS, WHICH WAS TO UNDERLINE TO THE THIRD WORLD THEIR OPEN POSITION CONCERNING VIETNAM. A LARGE NUMBER OF FRENCH BUSINESSMEN WERE CURRENTLY NEGOTIATING IN VIETNAM, AND SOME IN PARIS, IN ORDER TO ARRIVE AT CONTRACTS WHICH WOULD DRAW ON THE CREDITS WHICH FORM PART OF THE 1976 AID PROTOCOL CONCLUDED JUST BEFORE PHAM VAN DONG'S VISIT. THE GOF DOES NOT ENVISAGE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE 1977 PROTOCOL BEFORE THE "RENTREE" IN SEPTEMBER.

2. THE SOURCE COMMENTED THAT FRENCH BUSINESSMEN WERE CAUTIOUSLY LOOKING INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF INVESTMENTS. THE FRENCH BUSINESSMEN WERE PARTICULARLY CONFIDENTIAL

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INTERESTED IN MAINTAINING SOME OF THEIR EXISTING INVESTMENTS IN SOUTH VIETNAM, AND NEGOTIATIONS FOR ONE OF THEM, A PHARMACEUTICAL PLANT, WERE APPARENTLY PROCEEDING SMOOTHLY. THE OTHER PROJECTS WERE IN THE PRE-PREP-PLANNING STAGE. IT WAS CLEAR TO THE FRENCH BUSINESSMEN AS WELL AS THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT THAT THE INVESTMENT CODE (FRENCH VERSION) POUCHEO TO THE

DEPARTMENT ON MAY 10, 1977) DID NOT REALLY PROVIDE SIGNIFICANT GUIDELINES SINCE EACH INVESTMENT PROJECT HAD TO BE SEPARATELY WORKED OUT WITH THE SRV AUTHORITIES ANYWAY. FOR THE MOST PART, THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT THOUGHT THAT THERE WOULD BE LITTLE INCENTIVE FOR FRENCH BUSINESSMEN TO INVEST IN VIETNAM WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF THE FIELD OF PETROLEUM.

2. LAOS.

FRENCH RELATIONS REMAINED PRETTY COOL WITH THE LAO. THEY WERE CONTINUING TO TALK WITH THE LAO ABOUT THE DEBT PROBLEM, AND THEY WERE DETERMINED NOT TO GIVE IN ON THIS POINT. THEY DID NOT EXPECT TO MOVE AHEAD RAPIDLY SINCE THE LAO WERE ALSO BEING VERY STUBBORN, BUT AT LEAST RELATIONS WERE NOT NOW SO ACRIMONIOUS AS BEFORE.
GAMMON

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